GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1855
ANSWERED ON:10.12.2015
Presence of Arsenic in Major Rivers
Pathak Smt. Riti

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken any steps to decrease the level of arsenic in the water of river Ganga;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has any technology to deal with arsenic problem in the major rivers;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the measures taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to provide arsenic free water to the people?

Answer

THE HON'BLE MINISTER FOR WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION

(PROF. SANWAR LAL JAT)

(a) & (b) Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) is monitoring water quality at 1275 locations on 445 Rivers, including river Ganga. The monitored data does not reflect any detectable presence of Arsenic contamination in rivers at any of the monitored locations of the network.

(c) to (e) Use of alternate sources of Arsenic free water is the most commonly used technique to deal with Arsenic problem. As a measure to deal with Arsenic menace, Government of India through Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation (MoDWS) supplements the efforts of the States by providing them technical and financial support to the schemes being developed for drinking water supply in the States. 20% of the funds allocated under National Rural Drinking

Water Programme (NRDWP) of MoDWS are earmarked for water quality problems. Further, States may also utilize up to 67% of funds released under NRDWP for improving water quality of ground & surface water. MoDWS has targeted coverage of all remaining Arsenic and Fluoride affected habitations by March, 2017 either through surface water based supply schemes or by installation of community water purification plants to make available at least 8-10 liters per capita per day (LPCD) of safe drinking water to the affected rural people for drinking and cooking purposes.
In addition, Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) carries out exploratory drilling to delineate contaminant free aquifer zones and successful exploratory wells are handed over to the concerned State Agencies for utilization. Hydrogeological surveys and exploratory drilling carried out by CGWB in Arsenic affected areas of the Indo-Gangetic Plains have revealed that the contaminated aquifers are generally confined to 120 mbgl (metres below ground level) in the alluvial areas. CGWB has assisted in identifying Arsenic free aquifers and construction of Arsenic free wells in the following States:

S.No.	State	Number of Arsenic free wells constructed
1	West Bengal	161
2	Bihar	28
3	Chhattisgarh	6
4	Uttar Pradesh	28
5	Assam	47
Total		270

Besides, CGWB also conducts awareness raising programs on ground water related issues including quality issues related to contamination and pollution hazards.

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